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Robeson County commissioners give ECU land for dental clinic

By Ali Rockett  
Staff writer

LUMBERTON - The Robeson County Board of Commissioners has voted to donate 2.5 acres to East Carolina University to build a dental school in Lumberton.

The university's School of Dental Medicine, which admitted its first class in fall 2011, is planning to establish 10 Community Service Learning Centers throughout the state where fourth-year students will be educated and practice dental work in rural, underserved communities.

The site of the proposed center in Lumberton is located in front of Pinecrest Country Club on N.C. 711.

Greg Chadwick, interim dean of the dental school, said the school could not yet formally announce the Lumberton location, but the donation of the land is "certainly a major milestone" in the approval process.

Plans for the center call for 16 "operatories" in a 7,700-square-foot building. The initial economic impact for the county is estimated at $4 million, with a recurring annual impact of $1.5 million to $1.8 million with the employment of hygienists and office staff.

Chadwick said Robeson and its surrounding counties are among the most underserved areas in the state. Robeson County has about one dentist for every 5,000 residents - one-third the national average.

A typical four-year dental school operates on four levels, Chadwick said, but ECU has taken its fourth floor and distributed it among the 10 community centers.

One goal of the project is to attract students from these rural areas because they are more likely to return their communities to establish practices of their own.
"We realize that those (dentists) likely to come to Robeson County are those who are from here and have friends and family here," Chadwick told the commissioners.

He said that while the students are not required serve in a rural area after graduation, it is an "expectation."

After completing three years of education at the school's main campus in Greenville, four to five fourth-year students will visit the community campuses on a nine-week rotating schedule for practical experience. They will be overseen by two post-graduate residents and two faculty dentists, who will also care for patients.

Bill Smith, Robeson County's health director, said this effort is several years in the making.

ECU is partnering with Robeson Community College, which could lead to the establishment of the dental assistant or hygienist program at the college, Chadwick said.

The university has already announced five of the center locations. The first, located in Ahoskie, will open this summer. Elizabeth City, Lillington, Sylva and Spruce Pines locations have also been announced.

Staff writer Ali Rockett can be reached at rocketta@fayobserver.com or 486-3528.
Local swimmers shine at nationals
By Nathan Summers
Tuesday, May 8, 2012

Sarah Kehe is going places, and one of them is still the winner’s podium. That is thanks to the Greenville Swim Club Masters program, which allows swimmers of all ages like Kehe, a recent graduate of Ball State University, to keep right on swimming at a high level.

According to Greenville Masters and East Carolina assistant swim coach Kate Gordon, the program began in the fall of 2010 and the team now has about 30 members.

Swimmers train four days a week, including three days beginning at 5 a.m. The team is comprised of swimmers at different points in their careers, but many of them share impressive accolades in the pool.

Kehe, who is fittingly finishing up her more traditional Master’s at ECU in exercise physiology before reporting to physicians assistant school at Butler University, recently won a national title in the 50-yard breaststroke at a meet in Greensboro which featured 12 former Olympians.

“It’s pretty cool to be able to call myself a national champion to be honest,” said Kehe, also an ECU swimming assistant at one time, who claimed the
top spot in the 18-24 age group in Greensboro, while also taking third in the 200 freestyle and in the 500 freestyle. “The Masters program is a great opportunity to stay in the water, and to be able to have people to train with. We pretty much cater to every level, and practices kind of vary on based on your speed, and different people train in different lanes.

Kehe said national events are a great opportunity to connect with the swimming community at large, in and out of the pool.

“It’s not swimming four hours a day every day of the week or anything like that,” Kehe said of the training. “But it’s a good opportunity for me to continue in a sport I love. It’s a great group of people who all have something in common.”

In all, the Greensboro event fielded 1,863 swimmers from 47 states and seven countries, including an estimated 14 from the Greenville club.

The team’s other notable member is former LSU standout and NCAA champion Todd Torres, who also competed for Puerto Rico in the 1992 and ’96 Olympics.

Torres turned in a couple of top three finishes in Greensboro, taking second in the 50-yard breaststroke and second in the 100-yard breaststroke in the 40–44 age group.

Turning in top-10 finishes were Heather Reedy, Bill Brown, Joel Bullard and Casey Charles. Top-20 finishers included Tammy Perdue, Lisa Eagle, Maureen Despres, Kelly Barnhill, Lawrence Nye and Bob Patterson.

“It’s just a great team environment with people who just share a common interest and spend time doing it,” Kehe said.

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Restoring a gem in N.C.’s education system
By Jim Hart

Since 1963, North Carolina has been host to several hundred of the state’s top students each summer at Governor’s School. This program has enlightened, educated, opened doors and launched careers for 32,000 young men and women over the past 50 years. It was the first program of its kind in the nation, and the only program for gifted students that is available all across the state. At its height, it invited 800 students to two campuses to study the most modern, cutting-edge ideas in their chosen field of study.

Today, Governor’s School is on life-support. Only an outpouring of support from alumni, foundations and corporate sponsors is keeping the program alive in 2012. I am proud to have been part of the team that led that effort, but it is not a sustainable model for Governor’s School funding. Instead of six weeks, this summer’s session will be only five. Instead of 800 students, this summer will support only 550.

The program can only be restored by a return to state funding. And that is a good deal for the state – one that North Carolina should take.

In 1979, I was living in the little crossroads of Institute, in Lenoir County. My father worked at the DuPont Dacron factory in Kinston, and in those years of stagflation it was becoming harder to see how my parents would be able to send me to college. I was accepted to Governor’s School on the recommendation of my high school counselor.

It was the greatest experience of my life. Governor’s School turned a shy, introverted boy who hid his intellectual gifts for fear of ridicule by his classmates into an outgoing leader, proud of his accomplishments and eager do to more.

Today, I am a senior developer at SAS Institute in Cary. Governor’s School encouraged me to enroll at N.C. State University, and the experience also helped me secure grants and scholarships that made it possible for me to attend. Without Governor’s School, I might be working in a factory, like my father, or worse, laid off, as that sector of our state economy was hit hard by the recent recession.
My story is not unique by any means. In a recent survey of Governor’s School alumni, 95 percent said that Governor’s School helped them gain entrance to the college of their choice. Eighty percent said that Governor’s School helped them secure scholarships or other support that made it possible to attend. I have heard the stories of hundreds of alumni who rose from modest means to positions of leadership largely due to the influence of their summer at Governor’s School.

Most importantly, 99 percent of Governor’s School alumni told us that the program changed their lives for the better. That change translates directly into a positive impact here.

Over 70 percent of Governor’s School alumni return to North Carolina after college (most of whom attend college here, too). They contribute to this state in education, business, health care, science, engineering, computers, pharmaceutical research and law. They are playwrights, actors, artists, dancers, and musicians. They contribute to their communities through volunteer work, charity, faith and disaster relief. They help attract business, and they start businesses of their own.

They have won Academy Awards and Emmy Awards. They have sung on Broadway and trained American Idols. The success that Governor’s School alumni achieve and the social and economic impact they have are a hundred times more valuable than the program’s small investment in each of the attendees.

I understand that in tight economic times, we cannot afford everything we want. But cutting funding for this program is short-sighted. It’s not just summer camp for geeks. It’s about the future of our state. It costs about $2,000 to send each student to Governor’s School. Compare that with the difference the school makes in participants’ lives, and how that translates to benefits for North Carolina.

I urge all North Carolinians to support restoration of funding for this one-of-a-kind program.

Jim Hart is president of the North Carolina Governor’s School Alumni Association.
Students should take care with their own social media history

By Gracie Bonds Staples - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

ATLANTA— He has a website, a blog, a YouTube channel and he’s on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

If you want to know University of Georgia student Connor Nolte, 23, of Milton, Ga., take your pick. It’s all there for the world to see.

Done the right way, social media can be a boon for high school students and young adults like Nolte seeking a coveted internship, employment in the tight job market or a slot in this fall’s freshman class.

But college admissions officers and employment experts say it also can have the opposite effect.

Dan Rauzi, senior director of technology programs for the Atlanta-based Boys & Girls Clubs of America, said he has seen it happen.
Rauzi recalled a cautionary tale delivered by a Holland, Mich., senior at a recent youth conference. After a run-in with a school official, the student went home and, in frustration, posted a note on his Facebook page asking, “do we now have permission to brutally murder” the principal.

Although the student was accepted into college, Rauzi said, he faced felony charges that were later dropped and was given in-school suspension, fines and community service.

The student told his audience it was “11 words that changed my whole life.”

“As a parent, especially of two Division I athletes, there’s a lot of fear about that in my household,” said Kurt Nolte, Connor’s father.

And for good reason. In addition to playing an ever-increasing role in people’s personal and professional lives, social media use also is playing a role in job and college application decisions.

**More colleges checking profiles**

It has become increasingly common for employers to scour social media profiles to learn more about job candidates. Almost 1 in 5 people surveyed in the United States are going online to find jobs, but many are nervous about potential fallout from personal content on social networking sites, according to a 2011 survey by global workforce solutions leader Kelly Services.

And Jieun Choe, executive director of college admissions for Kaplan Test Prep, said a 2011 Kaplan survey found that 24 percent of admissions officers checked applicants’ Facebook or other social media pages – up from just 10 percent in 2008. Of those, 12 percent said they found something that negatively affected an applicant.

Also, Choe said, “Students should be mindful of their digital trail. That includes knowing what people are posting about them.”

Her advice to students?

“Google themselves,” Choe said. “The Internet has a really long memory, so this isn’t just about a specific phase in your life. This goes beyond college admission. It could impact your reputation, your job choices.”

That impact doesn’t have to be negative. Connor Nolte has used social media to brand himself in the same way corporations do, playing up the positive.

His website, www.connornolte.com, pictures him on the University of Georgia basketball court, with this simple message:
“My name is Connor. I play basketball at the University of Georgia. I graduated with a degree in marketing and am currently working on my master’s degree in sport management. I hope to combine both degrees to work in sports marketing in the near future.”

**Guarding your brand**

The graduate student credits the site, Twitter and his blog with helping him land two internships – one in 2010 with ESPN and another this summer with the U.S. Olympics. “Without social media, I am fairly certain I wouldn’t have gotten either internship. I wouldn’t have been able to differentiate myself as well.”

In 1999, when Boys & Girls Clubs of America released its first Internet safety program, Rauzi said people went online mostly to pull information off the Internet. But today we push information onto the Internet.

“Now I’m posting my life online,” he said. “That’s why Boys & Girls Clubs takes this seriously, and I think it’s really important that everyone who comes into contact with kids and teens, particularly parents, are talking to them about this – not in a way that is accusatory, but in a way that educates them and reminds them that this is important stuff.

“Just like Nike guards their brand, teens need to guard their personal brand,” he said.
UNC players made up 39 percent of suspect classes

By Dan Kane

Football and basketball players accounted for nearly four of every 10 students enrolled in 54 classes at the heart of an academic fraud investigation at UNC-Chapel Hill, according to figures released Monday.

The classes were all within UNC’s Department of African and Afro-American studies. An internal probe released Friday produced evidence of unauthorized grade changes and little or no instruction by professors. Forty-five of the classes listed the department’s chairman, Julius Nyang’oro, as the professor. Investigators could not determine instructors for the remaining nine.

University officials say they found no evidence that the suspect classes were part of a plan between Nyang’oro and the athletic department to create classes that student-athletes could pass so they could maintain their eligibility. They said student-athletes were treated no differently in the classes than students who were not athletes.

But the high percentages of student-athletes in the classes suggest to some that academic advisers, tutors and others in the athletic department may have guided them to the classes.

“These kids are putting in enormous amounts of time, and in at least some of the sports that are very physically demanding, they are missing a number of classes because of conflicts, and then if they are a marginal student to begin with, you’ve got to send them to Professor Nyang’oro’s class,” said former state Supreme Court Justice Robert Orr. “I think the academic counselors realized that and the tutors recognized it and frankly the folks up the food chain for the most part recognized it. But nobody wants to rock the boat because it’s big money.”

Orr, now an attorney, helped restore a UNC football player’s eligibility to play amid the NCAA’s probe into financial and academic benefits to members of the football team. The internal academic probe is an offshoot of that investigation.

There were 686 enrollments for the 54 suspect classes. Of those, football players accounted for 246 of the enrollments, or 36 percent, while basketball players
accounted for 23 enrollments, or three percent, according to UNC. Together, football and basketball players accounted for 39 percent of the enrollments.

Football and basketball players account for less than one percent of the total undergraduate enrollment – about 120 of the more than 18,500 undergraduate students on campus. On the other hand, many of the suspect classes were held in the summer, a time when many football players are on campus.

**Austin case spurred probe**

The internal investigation started after The News & Observer obtained the academic transcript of former football player Marvin Austin, who was kicked off the team after the NCAA probe found he had received improper financial benefits from a sports agent. Austin’s transcript showed he had been placed in an upper-level African studies class taught by Nyang’oro in the summer of 2007. At that point, Austin had yet to begin his first full semester as a freshman, and he had not taken a required remedial writing class.

Nyang’oro gave Austin a B-plus in the 400-level class. The university has been unable to explain how Austin ended up in the class. He could not be reached for comment. UNC’s investigation determined it was one of the suspect classes in which there was little evidence that the instructor did much if any teaching.

Questions regarding Nyang’oro’s instruction started after another football player kicked off the team, Michael McAdoo, had made public a class paper that got him in trouble. N.C. State University fans found several plagiarized passages that the university and the NCAA did not catch.

The investigation covered courses offered within the department from summer 2007 to summer 2011, though all but two of the classes were offered from 2007 to 2009. UNC officials said the only two people within the department who appear to have been responsible for the suspect classes were Nyang’oro and his administrative secretary, Deborah Crowder. Some professors interviewed for the probe said they did not authorize grade changes that students taking the classes had received and said their names had been forged on academic records.

Crowder retired in September 2009 and declined requests for interviews by the investigators. Nyang’oro stepped down as chairman last September when the investigation was in its early stages. He is retiring July 1. Investigators found no evidence showing Nyang’oro or Crowder received any financial benefit from offering the suspect classes or for unauthorized grade changes that students received.

Neither Nyang’oro nor Crowder has publicly commented on the report.
On Friday, university officials couldn’t say why no one brought the suspect classes to their attention before last summer. The two UNC academic officials who conducted the probe, Jonathan Hartlyn and William Andrews, did not interview students for the report. But Nancy Davis, a university spokeswoman, said the university’s counsel, Leslie Strohm, and its former faculty athletics representative, Jack Evans, did talk to students. Those interviews were not reflected in the report.

Ross: Situation resolved

On Monday, Tom Ross, the UNC system president, said in a statement that he saw no need to look further into the academic improprieties.

“I believe that this was an isolated situation and that the campus has taken appropriate steps to correct problems and put additional safeguards in place,” Ross said.

Hannah Gage, chairman of the UNC system’s Board of Governors, said she would not know if the board would be seeking more information until she had talked to others.
Editorial

UNC needs to worry less about TDs and more about GPAs

All North Carolinians should feel shame and utter disappointment in our state's flagship university after a faculty investigation confirmed academic dishonesty in one department at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Findings regarding professor-less classes and unauthorized grade changes in the Afro-American Studies Department, among other revelations, are an outgrowth of the equally embarrassing, two-year-old scandal involving inappropriate assistance to some members of the football team. That's in addition to previous discoveries that at least one tutor did some of the work for one student athlete who has since lost his scholarship, and other improprieties that led to NCAA sanctions for the Tar Heel football program.

While the NFL and NBA may look upon our universities as free farm clubs, even the elite athletes who attend should be expected to focus on their education and to do their own work. The participation by any academic department in this fraud, or a willingness to look the other way, should be punished as a major breach of the public trust.

Instead, Julius Nyang'oro, the former department chairman, whose name pops up often in the academic investigation, will be allowed to "retire" effective July 1. An administrator in the same department resigned last year.

The University of North Carolina is one of America's top public universities, a place it earned because of its focus on academic excellence and its attention to NCAA rules for student athletes. Now that reputation has been soiled by the ethical failings of a small segment of one academic department.

As the majority faction of the General Assembly seeks to slash even more money from higher education, some of its members will be tempted to point to this breach of the public trust as "proof" that waste and fraud are rampant in our state universities.
It would be wrong to use such a broad brush to define North Carolina's highly regarded university system. According to The News & Observer of Raleigh, the investigation found improprieties in only a small portion of the 616 classes taught during the two-year span covered in the report; many of the questions concern past summer courses. But a skeptical public will naturally wonder if this is just the tip of the iceberg.

It is not enough for UNC to settle for sanctions to the football program and the departure of employees linked to academic irregularities. The university has moved to shore up requirements for certain courses, but it should not stop with correcting the problem. Its administration and board of trustees must make certain all employees understand that compromising the institution's academic integrity – either by direct action or deliberate inaction – is a firing offense.
Some faculty, students protest diversity efforts

By Elisabeth Arriero

Several faculty members and students at Davidson College are protesting the college’s hiring and promotion practices, claiming that Davidson isn’t following through on its commitment to diversify its faculty.

“This has been an ongoing issue on our campus,” said Nancy Fairley, a full professor of anthropology at the college. “It’s the 21st century, and I still hear very ridiculous excuses to justify this lack of diversity on campus.”

Although many said that college officials have successfully diversified the student population in recent years, they have failed to do the same for the faculty.

Currently, 24 of the college’s 162 regular faculty members, or 14.8 percent, identify themselves as nonwhite, according to Davidson.

In April, about two dozen students and faculty held a bake-sale protest after college administrators told Asian-American religion professor Hun Lye that they would postpone until October a decision on his tenure.

Several professors said that in all the years of working at the college, they’ve never heard of a professor’s tenure decision being delayed.

Stacey Schmeidel, a Davidson College spokeswoman, said she didn’t have data on delayed tenure decisions.

During the bake sale, which started immediately after the college’s convocation, organizers sold cookies identified as “white,” “black,” “Hispanic” and “Asian” at different prices to highlight the small number of minority faculty members at the college. White cookies were the most expensive.
The next day, Lye asked the dean of faculty to withdraw his candidacy for tenure, which college officials accepted.

President Carol Quillen could not be reached for comment last week.

Lye is expected to teach at Davidson College through the fall semester of 2012.

Neither Lye nor Davidson officials would comment on Lye’s case. “Tenure decisions are personnel decisions, so we can’t comment on individual tenure cases,” Schmeidel said.

Fairley said the college’s diversity among faculty members has barely changed since she started teaching at the college in 1993.

For instance, Fairley said, there were four black teachers, including herself, when she was first hired nearly 20 years ago. Today, there are still four black teachers, she said.

Helen Cho, an associate professor of anthropology who has taught at Davidson College for 10 years, said the college doesn’t prepare students for the real world if the staff is as homogenous as it is.

“Because of globalization, it is absolutely imperative for American students to be globalized as well,” Cho said. She also said the college is woefully behind its peer institutions when it comes to diversity. For instance, minorities respectively comprise about 20 and 30 percent of the faculty at Amherst and Pomona colleges, respectively, according to the Common Data Set initiative by the College Board, U.S. News & World Report and others.

Schmeidel said the school is working to diversify its faculty but faces obstacles.

“Davidson College is committed to creating an environment of diversity and inclusively,” Schmeidel said last week. It is easier to increase diversity among the student population, Schmeidel said, because the college admits 500 new students each year. By comparison, the college typically hires between two and eight professors each year, she said. Last year, the college hired seven faculty members.

“The student population turns over quite a bit more quickly than faculty, which is one reason why diversifying faculty takes longer at Davidson,” she said.
Schmeidel said several factors may discourage prospective faculty members, minority or otherwise, from accepting a position at Davidson, including location in a small town in the South, salary and teaching load.

Fairley said there have been many studies done to show how the college can more effectively diversify its students and faculty.

Mel Mendez, a junior who identifies herself as part Filipino and part Puerto Rican, said she was “astounded” to learn about the lack of diversity among faculty members.

Mendez said the college experience is significantly diminished for all when students are not taught by faculty from an array of backgrounds.

Schmeidel said the college understands the importance of a diverse staff and has taken several steps to ensure such diversity.

For instance, the vice president of academic affairs tells each department chair about the importance of diversity, she said.

The college also includes an equity adviser on each search committee to prevent bias in the hiring process. Davidson College also budgets about $30,000 each year to place job advertisements in locations that will likely attract a diverse pool of candidates.

But Mendez and others said current efforts are not having the intended results and more should be done.

“We need a systematic approach to diversifying the faculty of color,” said Mendez. “So often at Davidson, we just talk. We talk too much. We need to be doing something and we need to start making this a priority.”
May 7, 2012

The following post comes from HRC Diversity Intern Ray Mays:

Last week, HRC field organizer Karess Taylor-Hughes and I traveled to the eastern part of the Tar Heel State to educate North Carolinians about the harms of Amendment One.

We met with many of the coalition’s leaders to provide them with tools and resources to better organize their constituents. We held presentations for the leaders of Wilmington Pride on attracting and keeping young volunteers. We also consulted with members of the Carteret Coalition against Constitutional Amendment and the Unitarian Coastal Fellowship.

Phone banks provided an opportunity to educate Carteret County constituents on the harms of Amendment One. We also distributed “Vote Against Amendment One” signs throughout the county.

Our fieldwork led us to two college campuses. At East Carolina University, we met with the LGBT student union and canvassed on campus. At UNC-Wilmington, we joined partners for a “Get Out the Vote” drive called “Ice Cream for Equality.” We offered free shuttle services to the polls and free ice cream as an incentive.

Being on the ground for a total of four days, we collected well over 200 pledges to vote against this discriminatory amendment and rallied many supporters to vote against Amendment One.
Jobs Few, Grads Flock to Unpaid Internships

By STEVEN GREENHOUSE

Confronting the worst job market in decades, many college graduates who expected to land paid jobs are turning to unpaid internships to try to get a foot in an employer’s door.

While unpaid postcollege internships have long existed in the film and nonprofit worlds, they have recently spread to fashion houses, book and magazine publishers, marketing companies, public relations firms, art galleries, talent agencies — even to some law firms.

Melissa Reyes, who graduated from Marist College with a degree in fashion merchandising last May, applied for a dozen jobs to no avail. She was thrilled, however, to land an internship with the Diane von Furstenberg fashion house in Manhattan. “They talked about what an excellent, educational internship program this would be,” she said.

But Ms. Reyes soon soured on the experience. She often worked 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., five days a week. “They had me running out to buy them lunch,” she said. “They had me cleaning out the closets, emptying out the past season’s items.” Asked about her complaints, the fashion firm said, “We are very proud of our internship program, and we take all concerns of this kind very seriously.”

Although many internships provide valuable experience, some unpaid interns complain that they do menial work and learn little, raising questions about whether these positions violate federal rules governing such programs.

Yet interns say they often have no good alternatives. As Friday’s jobs report showed, job growth is weak, and the unemployment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds was 13.2 percent in April.

The Labor Department says that if employers do not want to pay their interns, the internships must resemble vocational education, the interns must work under close supervision, their work cannot be used as a substitute for regular employees and their work cannot be of immediate benefit to the employer.

But in practice, there is little to stop employers from exploiting interns. The Labor Department rarely cracks down on offenders, saying that it has limited
resources and that unpaid interns are loath to file complaints for fear of jeopardizing any future job search.

No one keeps statistics on the number of college graduates taking unpaid internships, but there is widespread agreement that the number has significantly increased, not least because the jobless rate for college graduates age 24 and under has risen to 9.4 percent, the highest level since the government began keeping records in 1985. (Employment experts estimate that undergraduates work in more than one million internships a year, with Intern Bridge, a research firm, finding almost half unpaid.)

“A few years ago you hardly heard about college graduates taking unpaid internships,” said Ross Eisenbrey, a vice president at the Economic Policy Institute who has done several studies on interns. “But now I’ve even heard of people taking unpaid internships after graduating from Ivy League schools.”

Matt Gioe had little luck breaking into the music and entertainment industry after graduating with a philosophy degree from Bucknell last year. To get hands-on experience, he took an unpaid position with a Manhattan talent agency that booked musical acts. He said he answered phones and looked up venues. Although he was sometimes told to make bookings, he said he received virtually no guidance on how to strike a deal or how much to charge. But the boss did sometimes ask him to run errands like buying groceries.

“It was basically three wasted months,” he said.

Mr. Eisenbrey said many companies were taking advantage of the weak labor market to use unpaid interns to handle chores like photocopying or running errands once done by regular employees, which can raise sticky legal questions.

Eric Glatt, who at age 40 interned for the movie “Black Swan,” is one of the few interns with the courage to sue for wages over the work he did.

With an M.B.A. and a master’s in international management, Mr. Glatt wanted to get into film after a previous job overseeing training programs at the American International Group, the big insurance and financial services company. For “Black Swan,” he prepared documents for purchase orders and petty cash, traveled to the set to obtain signatures on documents and tracked employees’ personnel data.
“I knew that this was going to be a normal job and I wasn’t going to be paid for it,” he said. “But it started kicking around in my mind how unjust this was. It’s just become part of this unregulated labor market.”

Mr. Glatt filed suit, accusing Fox Searchlight Pictures of minimum wage violations. The company says it fully complies with the law and provides interns with a valuable, real-world work experience.

“The purpose of filing this case was to help end this practice,” said Mr. Glatt, who now plans to go to law school. “That was more important than my working on the next blockbuster.”

Ross Perlin, author of the 2011 book “Intern Nation,” said postcollege internships used to be confined to a few fields like film but have become far more common. “The people in charge in many industries were once interns and they’ve come of age, and to them unpaid internships are completely normal and they think of having interns in every way, shape and form,” he said.

Some interns say their experiences were quite helpful. Emily Miethner, a fine arts major at Hofstra, took an unpaid position at Gawker after graduating in 2010, doing research and social media for the news and gossip site. After two months, she moved to an unpaid internship at Flavorpill, an online cultural guide.

The knowledge she gained at those places, she said, was crucial to her landing a $35,000-a-year job as social media coordinator at Sterling Publishing. “More than just the individual tasks that I did, it was being in a great company culture and meeting a lot of people,” she said, noting that she was able to work without pay partly because she stayed at the home of her boyfriend’s parents.

Xuedan Wang, known as Diana, did not have such a positive experience. Ms. Wang, who graduated from Ohio State in 2010, interned at Harper’s Bazaar, working 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. overseeing eight other unpaid interns who ran around Manhattan picking up items from various fashion houses and showrooms.

She sued the fashion magazine in February, accusing it of minimum wage violations.

“Harper’s Bazaar was my favorite magazine growing up. I was dazzled that I was going to be working there,” she said. “But it was real grunt work, lugging things around.”
Hearst Magazines, which owns Harper’s Bazaar, said its internship programs enhanced students’ educational experience and fully complied with the law.

Some people end up on an internship treadmill. Joyce Lee, who received a film degree from Wesleyan in 2010, moved to Los Angeles and did six unpaid internships, including one for Scott Rudin, a top Hollywood and Broadway producer.

Her duties included reading scripts and picking up the mail. To pay her rent, she worked at a coffee shop and handed out fliers for a taxi company.

“Scott Rudin is made of money,” she said. “I don’t think it would be so hard for him to pay five interns the minimum wage.”

A spokesman for Mr. Rudin said he could not be reached for comment.

Ms. Lee, who is now in New York making her own film and supporting herself by again working at a coffee shop, said interns deserved better.

“If I ever become a famous filmmaker,” she said, “I promise I will pay my interns.”
A Gateway to a Career Through Volunteering

By EILENE ZIMMERMAN

Q. You are a new college graduate without a job or concrete career plans. You might be interested in doing public service work for a year or two. Could that help you find your way to a career?

A. Public service work for organizations like AmeriCorps, Teach for America or the Peace Corps can be a gateway to a variety of careers, including those outside public service.

Some organizations provide a stipend or salary, although the benefit of public service is not money — it is the time it allows new graduates to consider their options and learn about themselves, says Roberta Cross, director of career services at Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pa. The work can also build self-confidence, she says, and it can show graduates career paths they may not have known of or considered.

John Coleman, a management consultant in Atlanta and co-author of “Passion and Purpose: Stories From the Best and Brightest Young Business Leaders,” says public service work also provides an opportunity for mentorship and coaching from senior-level professionals, which you aren’t likely to receive in an entry-level corporate job.

Q. How do you decide what kind of work to pursue?

A. Take an inventory of your strengths, weaknesses, skills, interests and values, says Susan Jewkes Allen, a career counselor and co-founder of LifePlusWork, a career counseling and coaching business in San Francisco. “Take stock of yourself, writing down things like what you’re good at, not good at, your natural communication style, level of adaptability and aversion to risk,” she says. This will give you a heightened awareness of the kinds of jobs and tasks that could be a good fit in your public service work. Q. While volunteering, how do you keep in mind what you are learning about yourself?

A. Keep a journal of what you do each day, including the skills you learn and your reactions to what’s happening, says Donna Goldfeder, director of career services at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa. “At the end of the year you can look at the journal, and if you see that you wrote down 20
times you got a lot of satisfaction from helping people, maybe you should consider a helping profession,” she says.

Q. Are there things you can do to develop yourself professionally while volunteering, even if you’re not sure what profession you will ultimately pursue?

A. Young people working for a public service or nongovernmental organization usually have the chance to take part in activities that would not be open to them in the corporate world. “You may be teaching, managing finances, marketing to the local community, recruiting or managing people. You can explore all of these,” Mr. Coleman says.

Look for opportunities to interact with senior-level people at your organization and other nonprofits, or in the community. “One of the toughest things for a 22-year-old coming out of college is to understand how to relate to senior-level people,” he says. The only way to learn to do that and build up confidence is to immerse yourself in it. “Watch them and learn from them,” he says.

Ask senior colleagues if they would serve as references for you after your volunteer service, Ms. Cross says. They can also be resources, giving feedback on your résumé or connecting you with others who can help you professionally.

Q. When you have completed your public service, how do you connect what you’ve learned and enjoyed to a specific career and begin that professional transition?

A. Much of the information you need is already in your journal, Ms. Jewkes Allen says, and those bits and pieces are part of a puzzle about yourself that you are assembling. Research shows that for college graduates, “a fit between their interests, talents and market opportunity is one of the best determinants of career happiness,” she says.

You will very likely need help in putting that puzzle together. Ms. Goldfeder suggests consulting a career coach or a counselor at your alma mater for help in connecting your findings to a possible career path or job. “They have databases and tools that can be used to evaluate your new skills, interests and experiences and see where they match up with a professional career,” she says. Once you have identified possibilities, seek alumni from your college in fields you are considering and ask what they like or dislike about what they do.
It’s O.K. to change your mind, she says. “We often start our professional lives with a dream of where we will end up, yet very few of us end up there. That’s not failure; it’s that we continually adapt and adjust to the information we learn about ourselves.”

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**Vocation or Exploration? Pondering the Purpose of College**

By ALINA TUGEND

OUR oldest son is finishing up his junior year in high school, and we’re already overwhelmed by what I’ve been calling the college challenge — trying to figure out what college he can get into and what we can afford.

But there’s also a bigger debate raging that hovers over all our concerns. What exactly is a university education for?

Is it, narrowly, to ensure a good job after graduation? That’s how Rick Scott, the governor of Florida, views it. He has made waves by wanting to shift state financing of public colleges to majors that have the best job prospects. Hello science, technology, engineering and math; goodbye psychology and anthropology.

And Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon, has introduced the Student Right to Know Before You Go Act, which would require, among other things, that students have access to data on university graduates’ average annual earnings.

Or is the point of a university degree to give students a broad and deep humanities education that teaches them how to think and write critically? Or can a college education do both?

A little background: Before 1983, receiving a bachelor of arts degree in just about any subject “opened up lots of jobs,” said Anthony P. Carnevale, director of Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce. “You could get a B.A. in history and become an accountant. Then the economy underwent a cultural shift.”

Why the early 1980s? It was a combination of the deep recession of 1980-82 and the growth of computer-based technology.

“We started to see a widening distribution of earnings by majors,” said Professor Carnevale, who also served as chairman of the National Commission on Employment Policy under President Bill Clinton.

And that trend has continued. “I was raised to think what you needed was a college degree,” he said. “That’s not the game anymore. It’s what you major in.”
So does that mean I should urge our son to pursue a degree he doesn’t have any interest in because it may provide him with a higher-paying job — or any job, for that matter — after college?

No, Professor Carnevale said, because if you don’t like what you do, you won’t do it well. The point is that “young people now need to have a strategy,” he said. “If you major in art, realize you will have to get a master’s degree. The economic calculus has changed.”

Alex Tabarrok, an associate professor of economics at George Mason University and author of the e-book “Launching the Innovation Renaissance” (TED Books), is not just worried about students finishing four years of college with no jobs, but also that they may never get to the graduation podium at all.

“At least 40 percent of students drop out of four-year universities before graduation, and it’s even higher out of community colleges,” he said. “We have the highest college dropout rate in the industrialized world. Everyone recognizes that something is not quite right.”

Mr. Tabarrok said that we, as a country, needed to look more closely at emulating apprenticeship programs offered in European countries that turn out highly skilled workers.

“We tend to look down on vocational training in the United States, but in Europe, that’s where the majority of the kids go,” he said. “The U.S. mindset is that there is only one road to an education and to do anything else admits defeat.”

There are two main arguments against pushing more students into vocational training. The first is that it pigeonholes them in careers at a young age.

“We don’t want a system where people are tracked from early on,” said Andrew Delbanco, a professor of humanities at Columbia University and author of the new book “College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be” (Princeton University Press).

The second is that a good liberal arts degree isn’t simply a luxury when economic times are good, but a necessity at all times to create an engaged citizenry, he said.

“The university should be a place for reflection for the young to explore areas of the human experience, to be fully aware of history and the arts,” Professor Delbanco said. “We don’t want to have a population that has
technical competence but is not able to think critically about the issues that face us as a society.”

Professor Tabarrok argued, however, that the way the system was set up now, “We’re denying students a hands-on education.” A lot of high school students, he said, “would love to be paid to work alongside adults and learn.”

Do we have to land on one side or another? Not necessarily. To Anne Colby, a consulting professor at Stanford University and author of “Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education” (Jossey-Bass, 2011), the idea that we have to choose between vocational training and the rich, deep learning we associate with liberal arts is a false dichotomy.

She and her colleagues studied undergraduate business programs around the country — which more college students major in than any other field — and discovered that the best programs combined major elements of a liberal arts education and professional training.

One example, she said, is the Pathways program at Santa Clara University in California, in which students in all majors take thematically based sequences of courses that draw together several disciplines. Sustainability, the idea that the current generation can meet its needs without sacrificing future generations’, can be studied, for example, from the point of view of business, history, philosophy and politics. And at Indiana University, the Liberal Arts and Management Program offers interdisciplinary courses like “The History of the Automobile: Economy, Politics and Culture.” This program enables students to learn their specialty in the context of history, literature and other liberal arts.

“Universities need to be more creative in their thinking,” she said. And while internships can help bring a practical piece, faculty members need to oversee what is being learned and connect it back to the rest of the academic learning — something that is not done enough, she said.

José Luis Santos, an assistant professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, also said it was possible for four-year institutions to offer a solid humanities base along with specialization.

“Colleges and universities eventually respond to market needs all the time,” he said. One example, he said, was how they stepped in to offer Arabic language training when the demand rose for it after Sept. 11.

“That’s a very good example of realigning to meet market needs,” he said. “Colleges and universities eventually respond. It’s just at a slow pace. The critique is that they don’t do it in a timely manner.”
Although much of this is out of an individual student’s control, a student (and his parents) can try to think strategically. That doesn’t mean entering a major you have no interest in, but using all the resources your institution offers to help think about a career before graduation rolls around.

“Some colleges and universities have pretty creative career placement offices that provide events with people in the field,” Professor Colby said. “Take advantage of all the extracurricular activities and speakers. And look for coursework that involves the application of knowledge and real-world themes.”

And be a part of the debate. Things are changing, and that’s not necessarily bad. As Professor Tabarrok said, “Just because something worked in the past doesn’t mean it’s going to work in the new world we have now.”

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State Department Revises Foreign Student Job Program After Abuse Complaints

By JULIA PRESTON

The State Department, responding to a wave of complaints from foreign students about abuses under a summer cultural exchange program, issued new rules on Friday significantly revising the types of jobs the students can do, prohibiting them from most warehouse, construction, manufacturing and food-processing work.

The rules are the most extensive changes the State Department has made to its largest cultural exchange program since several hundred foreign students protested last summer at a plant in Pennsylvania that packs Hershey’s chocolates. The students said they were forced to work on grueling production lines lifting heavy boxes, often on night shifts, isolated in the plant from any American workers.

After paycheck deductions, the students said, they were paid so little they could not afford to travel in the United States, as the program promised.

Robin Lerner, deputy assistant secretary of state for private sector exchange, said the department’s goal with the revisions was “to bring the program back to its core cultural purposes.”

The five-decade-old Summer Work Travel Program brings more than 100,000 foreign university students here each year to work for up to three months and then travel for a month. The program, which uses a visa known as J-1, is designed to give students who are not from wealthy backgrounds a chance to experience the United States. The students’ trips are arranged by American sponsoring agencies that find jobs and housing for them.

The department said “the work component” of the program “has too often overshadowed the core cultural component” that Congress intended. The department also said the changes responded to concerns raised by the students at the Hershey’s packing plant.

Those students were “concentrated in single locations for long hours in jobs that provided little or no opportunity to interact with U.S. citizens,” the
department wrote to explain the rules. They were “exposed to workplace and safety hazards” and “subjected to predatory practices through wage deductions” for housing.

Under rules that will take effect early next week, international students will no longer be allowed to work in warehouse or packing jobs, on night shifts or in jobs the Labor Department has designated “hazardous to youth.” In addition, the students will not be placed in jobs involving gambling, traveling fairs, massage or tattooing.

After Nov. 1, students will not be allowed in most factory jobs, including manufacturing and food processing. They will be barred from mining, oil exploration and most construction jobs.

The State Department also established new requirements for sponsors to inform students about specific cultural activities that will be available and to review all jobs offered to students to make sure they are appropriate. Job placements “must provide opportunities for participants to interact regularly with U.S. citizens and experience U.S. culture during the work portion of their programs,” the rules specify.

Most students under the program have worked in resort jobs, in hotels or restaurants as waiters, desk clerks, lifeguards or maintenance staff members. Many worked in national parks.

The department also tightened requirements on sponsors to “confirm” annually with employers that no American workers were displaced by students. Employers will not be allowed to hire foreign students if they have laid off workers in the previous four months.

“These rules are a clear vindication by Secretary Clinton of the students’ claims,” said Saket Soni, executive director of the National Guestworker Alliance, the group that helped organize the Hershey students; he was referring to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. “They were right, and Hershey was wrong.”
Barbara Madeloni, front right, who runs the high school teacher training program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, with some of her students, who have refused to participate in a pilot program for a new licensing procedure being developed by the education company Pearson and Stanford University to be marketed to states nationwide.

May 6, 2012

Move to Outsource Teacher Licensing Process Draws Protest

By MICHAEL WINERIP

The idea that a handful of college instructors and student teachers in the school of education at the University of Massachusetts could slow the corporatization of public education in America is both quaint and ridiculous.

Sixty-seven of the 68 students studying to be teachers at the middle and high school levels at the Amherst campus are protesting a new national licensure procedure being developed by Stanford University with the education company Pearson.

The UMass students say that their professors and the classroom teachers who observe them for six months in real school settings can do a better job judging their skills than a corporation that has never seen them.
They have refused to send Pearson two 10-minute videos of themselves teaching, as well as a 40-page take-home test, requirements of an assessment that will soon be necessary for licensure in several states.

“This is something complex and we don’t like seeing it taken out of human hands,” said Barbara Madeloni, who runs the university’s high school teacher training program. “We are putting a stick in the gears.”

Lily Waites, 25, who is getting a master’s degree to teach biology, found that the process of reducing 270 minutes of recorded classroom teaching to 20 minutes of video was demeaning and frustrating, made worse because she had never edited video before. “I don’t think it showed in any way who I am as a teacher,” she said. “It felt so stilted.”

Pearson advertises that it is paying scorers $75 per assessment, with work “available seven days a week” for current or retired licensed teachers or administrators. This makes Amy Lanham wonder how thorough the grading will be. “I don’t think you can have a genuine reflective process from a calibrated scorer,” said Ms. Lanham, 28, who plans to teach English.

At this point the Teacher Performance Assessment that Pearson and Stanford are developing is still in the pilot stage, being tested by 200 universities in more than two dozen states. While it is meant to supplement traditional assessment methods like classroom observation, in reality it would be the final word for states that adopt it. Student teachers who do not pass would not be licensed.

Stanford officials say that, to the best of their knowledge, the UMass program is the only case of resistance.

The student teachers at UMass complain that they were being told to take part in the pilot program by university officials without their consent and that there were inadequate confidentiality protections for the schoolchildren appearing in the videos being sent to Pearson.

“As a parent, I wouldn’t give my permission to videotape my child and send it off into the twilight,” said Kristin Sanzone, 33, who is getting a master’s degree.

In previous years, parents had given permission to have their children videotaped for use by UMass instructors. But Ms. Madeloni said student teachers and principals had told her that they felt differently about sending videos off to a big company.
“If there are concerns about UMass, there’s someone nearby they can go to,” she said. “How do you complain to a corporation?”

Four local school districts that train student teachers declined to participate when they learned how the video would be used.

This year, when Ms. Madeloni questioned UMass administrators, they played down the need for consent from the student teachers and school districts. One dean wrote in February that Pearson was doing a “field test,” and “not a field research study,” and so no special consent was required.

In March, university officials reversed themselves, acknowledging that special consent forms were needed.

An associate dean offered books of Post-its as prizes for the first six student teachers who turned in consent forms.

The Post-its did not turn the tide.

Jerri Willett, the chairwoman of the department of teacher education and curriculum studies, said because it was a pilot program, it had taken time to develop procedures. She said officials were meeting to develop a statewide policy for confidentiality and consent.

Asked why so many students had refused to take part, Ms. Willett said they may have felt “forced” by faculty members. (None of those who posed for a photograph or were interviewed by this reporter said they had felt pressured.)

While Massachusetts has not made a decision about whether to require the Teacher Performance Assessment, six states — New York, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, Tennessee and Washington — have committed to adopting it in the next few years.

Ms. Willett said the education reform movement had been highly critical of teacher education programs, complaining that not enough weak candidates were being eliminated. An independent measure should reassure the public, she said.

She is one of hundreds of educators who have been consulted by Stanford to develop the new assessment. The 40-page test requires student teachers to submit several lesson plans and explain how they measure learning and adapt lessons to their special-needs students. “Until now we’ve assessed what students know about teaching,” she said. “This assesses teaching.”

Raymond Pecheone, a Stanford professor, said he had worked closely with Pearson to ensure extensive confidentiality protections. He said the student
videos can’t be downloaded or duplicated by scorers, nor used for marketing and promotion or training teachers.

Pearson plans to hold onto the videos for up to two years in case there are legal challenges, he said.

Mr. Pecheone said Pearson, which describes itself as the biggest education company in North America, was one of six to bid to work with Stanford. Pearson was chosen in part because it was the only company willing to provide enough seed money for a nationwide pilot program. “We needed an operating partner,” he said.

In states that choose Pearson-Stanford to manage the licensing, student teachers are expected to pay the company up to $300 apiece.

Washington State will require teaching candidates to pass the assessment next year. Wayne Au, a University of Washington professor, said based on the pilot, this approach was a considerably more sophisticated measure than traditional standardized tests. But because it is a mass-produced assessment, he said, students have already learned to manipulate it. “Their answers are shaped by what the test requires,” he said. “They’re not expressing who they are as teachers. It will do bad things.”

In New York, Pearson will be able to test a teacher’s worth from start to finish. The company currently administers the test students must pass to be admitted to a teaching program and is developing the testing system that will be used to calculate each teacher’s annual performance score.

How much impact any of this will have on teacher quality is debatable. California has had a performance assessment program in place for 10 years. According to Mr. Pecheone, 10 to 15 percent fail to get their license on the first try. When students retake the test, he said, only 1 to 2 percent fail to get a license.

At UMass, 1 to 2 percent of student teachers are weeded out of the program each year, according to Ms. Willett.

As for the idea that having an independent licensing test like California’s will improve the public’s opinion of teachers — no way. Politicians and businesspeople bash teachers in sunny California as much as they do in cloudy states. There is a whole education industry that is flourishing because it is built on the denigration of public schoolteachers.

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After War Room, Heading Ivy League Classroom

By ELISABETH BUMILLER

NEW HAVEN — On a recent evening in a classroom at Yale, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal held forth for two animated hours on the conflicts in Northern Ireland and South Africa, with bits of his own history as the former top commander in Afghanistan thrown in. In earlier classes he covered the Bay of Pigs and Vietnam and, as his students tell it, recounted in mesmerizing detail the events in “The Runaway General,” the Rolling Stone article that cost him his job.

General McChrystal’s seminar on leadership is nearly as hard to get into as Yale itself: this past semester some 200 students applied for a coveted 20 spots.

“The first day I came here, they were expecting a demonstration,” General McChrystal, who is retired from the military, said in an interview after class,
shortly before heading out to a New Haven bar for beers with his students. “And I was mad because there were only nine people” protesting his appointment.

Far from reacting with disdain or indifference, the Yale community has largely embraced him — just as the other Ivy League schools have started to open their doors to his peers.

Adm. Mike Mullen, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will teach a class on diplomacy and military affairs at Princeton this fall. Adm. Eric T. Olson, the former head of the military’s Special Operations Command, is offering a course on military strategy at Columbia starting in September.

Harvard regularly invites four-stars for speeches and lectures, among them David H. Petraeus, the retired general who is director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was on campus last month.

To the generation that was in college during the Vietnam War, it is unfathomable that Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the commander of American troops at the height of the Vietnam War, would have been welcomed in an Ivy League classroom. But since Vietnam and the end of the draft in 1972 — longer ago for today’s freshmen than World War II was for college students in the 1960s — the military has changed from a demoralized army into an all-volunteer force far better regarded because of the wars of the last decade.

In the last year, Harvard, Yale and Columbia have invited R.O.T.C. back to campus after banning the program during Vietnam, citing the end of the military’s ban on openly gay troops as the reason. The hiring of retired military officers as teachers in the Ivy League is part of the same evolution.

At Yale the military is, for most students, a great unknown, and many in General McChrystal’s class say they signed up out of curiosity. “I would never have imagined myself three years ago in a course taught by a general,” said Erik Heinonen, one of General McChrystal’s students and a former Peace Corps volunteer.

Some faculty members at Yale remain opposed to a retired celebrity general who does not hold their union card, a Ph.D., teaching at a civilian university, and say they are uncomfortable with his history of driving the secret commando raids that killed so many people in Iraq and Afghanistan. They
also point out that the wars of the last decade have been unpopular on campus.

But faculty members who support General McChrystal say that students distinguish between the warriors and the wars, and that Yale should include an option to learn firsthand about the military as part of a college education.

“There is almost no antimilitary bias among students,” said John Lewis Gaddis, a Yale history professor and the recipient of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for biography, who has welcomed General McChrystal to Yale. “I wouldn’t say it’s true among the faculty.”

Ivy Leagues, he said, still shy from teaching military history, although that is changing. (The Yale historian Paul Kennedy is developing a course on the military history of the West for undergraduates and Air Force R.O.T.C. students at Yale this fall.)

Peter Mansoor, a military historian at Ohio State University and retired colonel who was the executive officer to General Petraeus in Iraq, said, “In the wake of the Iraq and Afghan wars, academia realizes that warfare is not going to go away, and it’s better to understand than ignore it.”

Not that General McChrystal or Admirals Mullen and Olson are teaching military history. In General McChrystal’s recent seminar, open to both undergraduates and graduates, two hours was spent discussing how leadership was important to solving problems like apartheid. Like all his sessions, it was off the record — students are not supposed to talk about it outside class — because General McChrystal wanders into anecdotes about sensitive operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

His teaching style is loose: he wears khakis and open-necked shirts, insists that the students call him Stan, prods quiet students into talking and invites them all for runs with him and on overnight field trips to Gettysburg.

The theme in his case studies in leadership is that personal relationships matter — a view he set forth in another recent class about the 2010 Rolling Stone article, required reading, which quoted him and his staff as making dismissive comments about White House officials. Within days, President Obama fired him.

“That was a situation where it was completely unexpected, completely disorienting,” General McChrystal said in the interview. “Because you could have told me I was going to be killed by stampeding giraffes and I would have considered that more likely than I would have been accused of
something like that,” he said, referring to the report that he had been disrespectful to the White House.

He took two leadership lessons from the experience, he said he had told his students: first, his relationships saved him — “I had this network of friends that reached out to me” — and second, it was better for the country that he step down without disputing the article. “I didn’t try to fight it,” he said, adding that he knew “by the time an investigation could be done that we would have created so much scar tissue.”

In the interview, General McChrystal declined to comment on the article’s accuracy, as he always has. (Last year, a Defense Department investigation found no proof of wrongdoing by General McChrystal or his aides; Rolling Stone questioned the methods of the investigators and stood by the article.)

General McChrystal said it was painful to relive the episode in class, but he saw it as his obligation. “The only reason I’m here to teach” compared with “somebody who’s got a Ph.D., is because I’ve been through it,” he said, speaking of the Rolling Stone episode as well as his military career. “So I think I owe them that.”

Admiral Mullen said that at Princeton, he, too, would draw on his decades in the military, particularly the debates over the escalations in Iraq and Afghanistan, which spanned his time as chairman of the Joint Chiefs. In speaking at campuses around the country, he said, he has found “a thirst and an intellectual curiosity” about the military, but also a lot of stereotyping.

“I think there’s a great deal of work to be done to talk to students about who we are,” he said.

Admiral Olson, a former member of the Navy SEALs who as head of Special Operations Command had a central role in planning the raid last year that killed Osama bin Laden, said the military had a lot to learn, too. His class at Columbia is to focus on irregular warfare, but he said he was most looking forward to “ideas and conversations that I wouldn’t otherwise have the opportunity to have.” In short, he said, “it’s an entry into a different world.”
Big East Commissioner John Marinatto resigned after a tenure defined by the exits of Pittsburgh, Syracuse and West Virginia.

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**Commissioner Steps Down Amid Big East’s Instability**

By PETE THAMEL

When Big East Commissioner John Marinatto resigned Monday, the battered league was left at another crossroads. It could either crumble or find itself a billion-dollar television deal in September.

The Big East, scheduled to have 13 Football Bowl Subdivision programs and 18 basketball universities, now has a gypsy’s soul, with Kardashian commitment issues and a future so unstable that its pool of candidates will not be filled with polished clones like Pacific-12 Commissioner Larry Scott.
Marinatto’s departure comes after less than three years, a period defined by the exits of Pittsburgh, Syracuse, West Virginia — and Texas Christian, which left for the Big 12 before ever playing a game. Marinatto was overwhelmed and exasperated by the tumult, and the difficulty of the job may be appreciated only by the next brave soul who signs up.

The former Big East commissioner Mike Tranghese called it a “sad day.”

“I thought that the basketball and football schools coexisted beautifully up to the point when Syracuse, Pittsburgh and West Virginia departed,” Tranghese said Monday in a telephone interview. “At that point, I thought the basketball schools ought to take a real hard look. Whether they’re going to, I don’t know.”

Since the departures of Syracuse and Pittsburgh in October to the Atlantic Coast Conference, the athletic directors at the Big East’s non-F.B.S. universities have had frequent conference calls about the state of their league. There is no imminent plan or intent to leave, and they have not so much as whispered about calling Xavier or contemplated the vexing legal issues tied to leaving.

While the plan now is to stay put, the non-F.B.S. Big East programs lost a comfortable partner in Marinatto, who, as a former Providence athletic director, knew their perspective.

But the basketball universities wield an unusual amount of power, and if they pull out, it could start a chain reaction that would doom the remaining programs.

The F.B.S. universities — assuming Notre Dame would not be among them — have not been together long enough under N.C.A.A. guidelines to retain the league’s automatic bid to the N.C.A.A. tournament, meaning at the very least they would be forced to appease those basketball universities on some issues. The basketball universities could also make a play for the league’s most valuable remaining asset — the five-day Big East men’s tournament at Madison Square Garden.

No one is sure if people will pine to go to the Garden to watch Houston and Central Florida play. Could the core of Catholic universities — Villanova, St. John’s and Georgetown — lure a few like-minded basketball-centric partners — Xavier, Dayton, Richmond, St. Joseph’s or Butler? — for a Garden party each March and plenty of N.C.A.A. tournament bids?

“I just don’t know,” Tranghese said. “That’s probably a question, if they haven’t already, they’re going to have to ask themselves.”
The surprising reality with the Big East — if it stays together in its intended 13-team and 18-team formats — is that it could still be a lucrative league. Football drives the financial bus, and basketball provides boundless inventory. While there have been plenty of jokes about who would want to watch San Diego State and Connecticut play football, apparently someone is willing to pay to find out.

Neal Pilson, a media consultant and former president of CBS Sports, predicted that the Big East could surpass the deal it turned down last year, which was considered similar in value to the A.C.C.’s $155 million annual deal.

“I think if they stay together and negotiate as a single unit, I think they can come away with a reasonably favorable result,” Pilson said. “Even more than what ESPN offered a year and a half ago. I think the competition will drive it.”

The Big East is a bit like the game Jenga, a stack of wooden blocks haphazardly arranged atop one another. The most likely piece to be removed is Louisville. It is not a matter of whether it wants to go to the Big 12 as much as if it will be invited. If the Big 12, which has 10 teams, decides to expand to 12, would it invite Cincinnati to go with Louisville?

“The critical thing is that they have to stay together,” Pilson said of the Big East.

The next critical Jenga piece is Notre Dame, which would definitely leave if the basketball universities left — and could possibly leave even if they don’t. The A.C.C. is the most likely destination. The Irish’s television contract with NBC, currently under negotiation, will go a long way in determining their future — as will how they fare as a stakeholder in the new college football playoff. That appears to be safe and stable for now.

If Notre Dame leaves for the A.C.C., its only realistic destination, the A.C.C. will take Connecticut or Rutgers to make it a 16-team league. And that would send all the Big East blocks tumbling.

In a future filled with obstacles and potential stumbling blocks, perhaps the biggest one facing the Big East will be cleaning up the internal culture and bonding a group of universities whose common denominators have become survival and money instead of history and tradition.

Marinatto hinted at the culture issue in a telephone interview Monday, saying how he saw people whom the league had long-term relationships with “suddenly become untrustworthy.” He added, “It’s discouraging and
disappointing, and it’s not part of what you think intercollegiate athletics or higher education is about.”

Marinatto later told The Associated Press, “Clearly, the collegiate model is dead.”

Tranghese was more blunt, blaming the university presidents who have a huge stake in athletics but little background in sports.

“If the presidents are making the decision, they’re in trouble,” Tranghese said. “The presidents don’t know enough. That’s been proven time and again.”

The presidents better choose their next leader wisely. (Joe Bailey, a former Miami Dolphins chief executive is the interim commissioner.) If the Big East doesn’t make a smart choice, it could be picking up the pieces of a broken league again.
Prominent legal scholar and China expert comes to aid of Chen Guangcheng

By Daniel de Vise and William Wan, Published: May 4

The man who plotted Chen Guangcheng’s possible escape from China to study law at New York University is a veteran legal scholar who shares the activist’s passion for chiding Chinese officials when they fail to follow their own laws.

When Chen weighed his options inside the U.S. Embassy in Beijing this week after fleeing house arrest, he told American officials that there was one adviser he could trust: Jerome Cohen, 81, an NYU law professor who is considered the godfather of Chinese legal studies in the United States.

They spoke multiple times by phone, and Chen eventually accepted Cohen’s invitation to defuse a political crisis by coming to the United States as a visiting scholar at NYU’s U.S.-Asia Law Institute. It was Cohen’s idea and a typically elegant solution: By departing China as a traveling scholar rather than as an asylum-seeker, Chen would spare both governments political embarrassment.
“This has been a hectic 72 hours,” Cohen said Friday, speaking by telephone from his New York home, hoarse from a cold. “But it’s coming out well, I hope. You know, I’m an eternal optimist.”

Cohen, known for his mustache and bow tie, is a towering figure in Sino-American legal relations, with credentials befitting the political elite.

The son of a New Jersey lawyer, Cohen graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Yale, graduated at the top of his Yale Law School class and clerked for two U.S. Supreme Court justices. He taught law at the University of California at Berkeley and Harvard University, where he founded the United States’ first East Asia legal studies program.

“There’s probably not anybody teaching today who wasn’t either Jerry’s student or someone he impacted in some way,” said Adam Segal, a senior fellow and colleague at the Council on Foreign Relations, where Cohen is an adjunct senior fellow.

Cohen embraced China when the nation and its legal system were not deemed worthy of serious attention. He learned Mandarin in the basement of his Berkeley home and became the first Western lawyer to practice in Beijing, according to a profile in the NYU School of Law’s magazine. By chance, Cohen shares a birthday with that of the Chinese Communist Party.

“I just knew that China was going to be very important to our future, and its law was going to be very important to our interaction,” he said.

Human rights was always on Cohen’s radar. In recent years, it has moved toward the center of his agenda.

Cohen has leveraged his diplomatic stature to help negotiate the release of several political prisoners, including Kim Dae-jung, who later was president of South Korea and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, and Annette Lu, who would rise to be vice president of Taiwan, according to the university profile.

Kenneth Lieberthal, a China expert from the Brookings Institution, recalled a function he attended with Cohen, “where a former student walked up to him and said, ‘Jerry, it’s amazing, you’ve built a career teaching around Chinese law. But as you seem to point out in books, there is no Chinese law.’ In that funny way he has, he simply said, ‘Yes.’”

Rather than judge China by Western standards, Cohen’s usual tack is to press Chinese officials to adhere to their own laws. He succeeds, colleagues say, on the strength of his reputation.
“I think China understands that to deny access to professor Cohen would send such a negative signal around the world that they just can’t afford to do it,” said Jared Genser, a human rights lawyer who has collaborated with Cohen. “He’s that important.”

Cohen, who met Chen in 2004, was drawn to the blind, self-taught lawyer partly because he shared Cohen’s knack for challenging Chinese authorities over legal abuses. Chen was incarcerated after filing suit on behalf of women who underwent forced sterilizations and forced abortions, both of which are forbidden by Chinese law.

“I’m interested in, and he’s interested in, trying to improve the Chinese legal system,” Cohen said. “And, obviously, there’s room for improvement.”

The two hadn’t spoken in several years when Cohen took a call Monday morning from Chen’s American advisers, who told him that Chen had named him as “the only person he could trust,” Cohen said.

Chen’s first plan was to relocate with his family from their walled-in farmhouse to a Chinese university so that he could begin the formal study of law. “He didn’t want to leave China. He didn’t want to give up his important work,” Cohen said.

He advised Chen that he should accept the deal only if President Obama personally made “some endorsing statement,” so that all parties would honor it.

But then, Chen changed his mind: He wanted to leave the country to ensure his family’s safety.

Cohen said he played no direct role in the second round of negotiations between U.S. and Chinese officials, “except Chen knew that I would invite him” to come to NYU. Cohen had assumed that journey might happen in a year or two. Now, he said, “I suppose the whole thing can be done in a month.”

As a visiting scholar, Chen would receive a salary, likely paid by the Chinese government. The visit would probably be limited to a few months, Cohen said.

“He’ll get a start toward the legal education he’s always wanted,” he said.

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Funniest commencement speeches
By Valerie Strauss
Update: Adding Will Ferrell, Ray Bradbury, Kermit the Frog

If you have ever sat at a commencement speech and listened to a speaker droning on and on and on and on and on and on, then you might appreciate the following excerpts from some of the funniest speeches ever delivered at a graduation.

Conan O’Brien
Dartmouth College, 2011 Commencement

Before I begin, I must point out that behind me sits a highly admired president of the United States and decorated war hero while I, a cable television talk show host, has been chosen to stand here and impart wisdom. I pray I never witness a more damning example of what is wrong with America today.

Graduates, faculty, parents, relatives, undergraduates, and old people that just come to these things — Good morning and congratulations to the Dartmouth Class of 2011. Today, you have achieved something special — something only 92 percent of Americans your age will ever know: a college diploma. That’s right, with your college diploma you now have a crushing advantage over eight percent of the work force. I’m talking about dropout losers like Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg. Incidentally, speaking of Mr. Zuckerberg, only at Harvard would somebody have to invent a massive social network just to talk with someone in the next room.

My first job as your commencement speaker is to illustrate that life is not fair. For example, you have worked tirelessly for four years to earn the diploma you’ll be receiving this weekend, and Dartmouth is giving me the same degree for interviewing the fourth lead in Twilight. Deal with it. Another example that life is not fair: if it does rain, the powerful rich people on stage get the tent. Deal with it....

I’ve done my research. This college was named after the Second Earl of Dartmouth, a good friend of the Third Earl of UC Santa Cruz and the Duke of the Barbazon School of Beauty.
Your school motto is “Vox Clamantis in Deserto,” which means “Voice Crying Out in the Wilderness.” This is easily the most pathetic school motto I have ever heard. Apparently, it narrowly beat out “Silently Weeping in Thick Shrub” and “Wimpering in Moist Leaves without Pants.”

Your school color is green, and this color was chosen by Frederick Mather in 1867 because, and this is true, ‘It was the only color that had not been taken already.’ I cannot remember hearing anything so sad.

Dartmouth, you have an inferiority complex, and you should not. You have graduated more great fictitious Americans than any other college. Meredith Grey of Grey’s Anatomy. Pete Campbell from Mad Men. Michael Corleone from The Godfather. In fact, I look forward to next years’ valedictory address by your esteemed classmate, Count Chocula.

Of course, your greatest fictitious graduate is Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner. Man, imagine if a real treasury secretary made those kinds of decisions. Oh, I know. You’re going to say, ‘We’ve got Dr. Seuss.’ Well guess what, we’re all tired of hearing about Dr. Seuss. Face it: The man rhymed fafloozle with saznoozle. In the literary community, that’s called cheating....

Amy Poehler

Harvard University, 2011 Commencement

Friends, Romans, countrymen: lend me your beers. I am honored that you chose me to help you celebrate your graduation today. I can only assume I am here today because of my subtle and layered work in a timeless classic entitled ‘Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo.’ And for that I say, you’re welcome. I’m truly, truly delighted to be here at Harvard. I graduated from Boston College. Which some call the Harvard of Boston. But we all know that Harvard is the Harvard of Harvard. And you can quote me on that....

What do I know about Harvard? I know it is the oldest American university. I know it provides the ultimate experience in higher learning and according to the movies, I know it is filled with people who get rich either by inventing things or suing the people who they claim stole their invention. Let me be clear. I believe everything I see in movies. And if you remember anything I say today, remember this. Every single thing you see in movies is real.

So, what do the fine students of 2011 need to hear from me? ... All I can tell you today is what I have learned. What I have discovered as a person in this world. And that is this: you can’t do it alone. As you navigate trough the rest of your life, be open to collaboration.....
**Dolly Parton**  
*University of Tennessee, 2009 Commencement*

...Anyway, I know this is a big big day for you. And I never dreamed, never ever ever dreamed that I would be a commencement speaker.

Now sing, yes I can do that.

No problem, but making speeches I’m a little nervous.  
Seriously.

Nervous, because I know that I am suppose to say something meaningful to you. Maybe some good advice for you to always remember. Now I usually try not to give advice Information, yes, advice, no. But, what has worked for me may not work for you.

Well, take for instance what has worked for me.

Wigs.
Tight clothes.
Push up bras.
High heel shoes, five inch high heel shoes....

...Now people are always asking me, what do you want people to say about you a hundred years from now? I always say I want them to say say, ‘dang, don’t she still look good for her age.’

But all joking aside.

I think people will remember us for who we were, not how many records we sell, or how much money we make. Because I have always said that I have always counted my blessings far more often than I’ve counted my money....

**Ellen DeGeneres**  
*Tulane University, 2009 Commencement*

When I was asked to make the commencement speech, I immediately said yes. Then I went to look up what commencement meant.... I thought that you had to be a famous alumnus, alumini, aluminum, alumis — you had to graduate from this school. And I didn’t go to college here, and I don’t know if President Cowan knows, I didn’t go to any college at all. Any college. And I’m not saying you wasted your time, or money, but look at me, I’m a huge celebrity....
I’m here because of you. Because I can’t think of a more tenacious, more courageous graduating class. I mean, look at you all, wearing your robes. Usually when you’re wearing a robe at 10 in the morning, it means you’ve given up.

I’m here because I love New Orleans. I was born and raised here, I spent my formative years here, and like you, while I was living here I only did laundry six times. When I finished school, I was completely lost. And by school, I mean middle school, but I went ahead and finished high school anyway.

And I — I really, I had no ambition, I didn’t know what I wanted to do. I did everything from — I shucked oysters, I was a hostess, I was a bartender, I was a waitress, I painted houses, I sold vacuum cleaners, I had no idea. And I thought I’d just finally settle in some job, and I would make enough money to pay my rent, maybe have basic cable, maybe not, I didn’t really have a plan, my point is that, by the time I was your age, I really thought I knew who I was, but I had no idea. Like for example, when I was your age, I was dating men. So what I’m saying is, when you’re older, most of you will be gay. Anyone writing this stuff down? Parents?....

...As you grow, you’ll realize the definition of success changes. For many of you, today, success is being able to hold down 20 shots of tequila. For me, the most important thing in your life is to live your life with integrity, and not to give into peer pressure.

J.K. Rowling

Harvard University, 2008 Commencement

...The first thing I would like to say is ‘thank you.’ Not only has Harvard given me an extraordinary honor, but the weeks of fear and nausea I have endured at the thought of giving this commencement address have made me lose weight. A win-win situation! Now all I have to do is take deep breaths, squint at the red banners and convince myself that I am at the world’s largest Gryffindor reunion.

Delivering a commencement address is a great responsibility; or so I thought until I cast my mind back to my own graduation. The commencement speaker that day was the distinguished British philosopher Baroness Mary Warnock. Reflecting on her speech has helped me enormously in writing this one, because it turns out that I can’t remember a single word she said. This liberating discovery enables me to proceed without any fear that I might inadvertently influence you to abandon promising careers in business, the law or politics for the giddy delights of becoming a gay wizard.
You see? If all you remember in years to come is the ‘gay wizard’ joke, I’ve come out ahead of Baroness Mary Warnock. Achievable goals: the first step to self improvement....

Steven Colbert

Knox College, 2006 Commencement

....When you enter the workforce, you will find competition from those crossing our all-too-porous borders. Now I know you’re all going to say, ’Stephen, Stephen, immigrants built America.’ Yes, but here’s the thing — it’s built now. I think it was finished in the mid-70s sometime. At this point it’s a touch-up and repair job. But thankfully Congress is acting and soon English will be the official language of America. Because if we surrender the national anthem to Spanish, the next thing you know, they’ll be translating the Bible. God wrote it in English for a reason! So it could be taught in our public schools.

So we must build walls. A wall obviously across the entire southern border. That’s the answer. That may not be enough— maybe a moat in front of it, or a fire-pit. Maybe a flaming moat, filled with fire-proof crocodiles. And we should probably wall off the northern border as well. Keep those Canadians with their socialized medicine and their skunky beer out. And because immigrants can swim, we’ll probably want to wall off the coasts as well. And while we’re at it, we need to put up a dome, in case they have catapults. And we’ll punch some holes in it so we can breathe. Breathe free. It’s time for illegal immigrants to go — right after they finish building those walls. Yes, yes, I agree with me.

There are so many challenges facing this next generation, and as they said earlier, you are up for these challenges. And I agree, except that I don’t think you are. I don’t know if you’re tough enough to handle this. You are the most cuddled generation in history. I belong to the last generation that did not have to be in a car seat. You had to be in car seats. I did not have to wear a helmet when I rode my bike. You do. You have to wear helmets when you go swimming, right? In case you bump your head against the side of the pool. Oh, by the way, I should have said, my speech today may contain some peanut products....

Jon Stewart

College of William & Mary, 2004 Commencement

Thank you Mr. President, I had forgotten how crushingly dull these ceremonies are. Thank you....
I am honored to be here and to receive this honorary doctorate. When I think back to the people that have been in this position before me from Benjamin Franklin to Queen Noor of Jordan, I can’t help but wonder what has happened to this place. Seriously, it saddens me. As a person, I am honored to get it; as an alumnus, I have to say I believe we can do better. And I believe we should. But it has always been a dream of mine to receive a doctorate and to know that today, without putting in any effort, I will. It’s incredibly gratifying. Thank you. That’s very nice of you, I appreciate it.

I’m sure my fellow doctoral graduates — who have spent so long toiling in academia, sinking into debt, sacrificing God knows how many years of what, in truth, is a piece of parchment that in truth has been so devalued by our instant gratification culture as to have been rendered meaningless — will join in congratulating me. Thank you....

Let talk about the real world for a moment. We had been discussing it earlier, and I...I wanted to bring this up to you earlier about the real world, and this is I guess as good a time as any. I don’t really know to put this, so I’ll be blunt. We broke it.

Please don’t be mad. I know we were supposed to bequeath to the next generation a world better than the one we were handed. So, sorry....

When I spoke earlier about the world being broke, I was somewhat being facetious, because every generation has their challenge. And things change rapidly, and life gets better in an instant.

I was in New York on 9-11 when the towers came down. I lived 14 blocks from the Twin Towers. And when they came down, I thought that the world had ended. And I remember walking around in a daze for weeks. And Mayor Giuliani had said to the city, ‘You’ve got to get back to normal. We’ve got to show that things can change and get back to what they were.’

And one day I was coming out of my building, and on my stoop, was a man who was crouched over, and he appeared to be in deep thought. And as I got closer to him I realized, he was playing with himself. And that’s when I thought, ‘You know what, we’re gonna be OK.’


Bono

University of Pennsylvania, 2004 Commencement

My name is Bono and I am a rock star. Don’t get me too excited because I use four letter words when I get excited. I’d just like to say to the parents,
your children are safe, your country is safe, the FCC has taught me a lesson and the only four letter word I’m going to use today is P-E-N-N. Come to think of it ‘Bono’ is a four-letter word. The whole business of obscenity--I don’t think there’s anything certainly more unseemly than the sight of a rock star in academic robes. It’s a bit like when people put their King Charles spaniels in little tartan sweats and hats. It’s not natural, and it doesn’t make the dog any smarter....

It was at that point when your trustees decided to give me their highest honor. Doctor of Laws, wow! I know it’s an honor, and it really is an honor, but are you sure? Doctor of Law, all I can think about is the laws I’ve broken. Laws of nature, laws of physics, laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and on a memorable night in the late seventies, I think it was Newton’s law of motion...sickness. No, it’s true, my resume reads like a rap sheet. I have to come clean; I’ve broken a lot of laws, and the ones I haven’t I’ve certainly thought about. I have sinned in thought, word, and deed. God forgive me. Actually God forgave me, but why would you? I’m here getting a doctorate, getting respectable, getting in the good graces of the powers that be, I hope it sends you students a powerful message: Crime does pay.

So I humbly accept the honor, keeping in mind the words of a British playwright, John Mortimer it was, “No brilliance is needed in the law. Nothing but common sense and relatively clean fingernails.” Well at best I’ve got one of the two of those....

**Will Ferrell**

**Harvard University, 2003 Commencement**

This is not the Worcester, Mass Boat Show, is it? I am sorry. I have made a terrible mistake. Ever since I left “Saturday Night Live,” I mostly do public speaking now. And I must have made an error in the little Palm Pilot. Boy. Don’t worry. I got it on me. I got the speech on me. Let’s see. Ah, yes. Here we go.

You know, when Bill Gates first called me to speak to you today, I was honored. But when he wanted me to be one of the Roxbury Guys, I – Sorry, that’s Microsoft. I’m sorry about that. Star Trek Convention. No. NRA. NAACP. Dow Chemical. No. But that is a good one. That is a good speech. The University of Michigan Law. John Hopkins Medical School. I’m sorry. Are you sure this isn’t the boat show? No, I have it. I don’t have it on me. I do. It’s here. Thank you....
I graduated from the University of Life. I received a degree from the School of Hard Knocks, and our colors were black and blue, baby. We had office hours with the Dean of Bloody Noses. I borrowed my class notes from Professor Knuckle Sandwich and his Teaching Assistant, Miss Fat Lip Fong Ngyuen. That’s the kind of school I went to, for real...

You’re about to enter into a world filled with hypocrisy and doublespeak, a world in which your limo to the airport is often a half-hour late. In addition to not even being a limo at all; often times it’s a Lincoln Towncar. You’re about to enter a world where you ask your new assistant, Jamie, to bring you a tall, non-fat latte. And he comes back with a short soy cappuccino. Guess what, Jamie? You’re fired. Not too hard to get right, my friend...

I’m sorry, graduates. But this is a world where you aren’t allowed to use your cell phone in airplanes, during live theater, at the movies, at funerals, or even during your own elective surgery. Apparently, the Berlin Wall went back up because we now live in Russia...

One of you, specifically John Lee, will spend most of your time just hanging out in your car eating nachos. You will all come back from time to time to this beautiful campus for reunions, and ask the question, ‘Does anyone ever know what happened to John Lee?’ At that point, he will invariably pop out from the bushes and yell, ‘Nachos anyone?!’....

Make no mistake, Harvard University is one of the finest in the land. And its graduates are that fine as well. You’re young men and women whose exuberance exude a confident confidence of a bygone era. I believe it was Shakespeare who said it best when he said, “Look yonder into the darkness for knowledge onto which I say go onto that which thou possess into thy night for thee have come with only a single sword and vanquished thee into darkness.” I’m going to be honest with you, I just made that up. But I don’t know how to delete it from the computer...

[Speaking as former president George W. Bush:] The chances of finding a decent job are about as good as finding weapons of mass destruction in the Iraqi desert. Slim and none.

Ray Bradbury

California Institute of Technology, 2000 Commencement

Along the way, I worked for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. They were putting on a planetarium show, with astronomy, of course. But, they were boring the hell out of people. They took me in to see the show, and within 10 minutes, everybody was asleep. You could hear snoring all
over the planetarium. And they took me back to the office, and the head of the Smithsonian said to me, ‘What are we doing wrong?’ I said, ‘My God, do you know what you’re doing in there? You’re teaching with this planetarium, instead of preaching.’ A planetarium is a synagogue, a church, a basilica. It’s a place to celebrate the universe, and the incredible fact of our being alive in this world. I said, ‘Get out of the way with your scientific technology, and let me do a thing called the Great Shout of the Universe. The universe coming alive for all these mysterious reasons.’

So they hired me to write a new program for the planetarium. I did 32 pages on the incredible miracle of life on Earth, and the whole history of astronomy going back 2,000 years, and then 500 years into the future. I turned in the 32 pages, and they sent me 28 pages of criticism. I called them on the phone. I said, ‘What’s the problem?’ They said, ‘Well, this scientific thing is wrong—that scientific thing is wrong.’ I said, ‘You don’t understand, I’m the guy who invented an atmosphere on Mars. And Caltech invites me back all the time.’ I said, ‘You mustn’t teach, you must preach. And if you do a good job of preaching, people will go out and buy the book, or go to the library and borrow it, and learn all these wonderful things that you want them to learn. But in the meantime, let me shout.’

I said, ‘What’s the one thing that bothers you the most about my script?’ They said, ‘Well, you’ve got a thing in there about the Big Bang occurring 10 billion years ago.’ I said, ‘When did it occur?’ They said, ‘12 billion years ago.’ I said, ‘Prove it.’ Well, that ruined it right there. The marriage was over. So after another two weeks of arguing with these people, I said, ‘You want to go back to boring people. I don’t want to bore people. I want to excite them!’

Because it’s wonderful to have one life, to be on this world — to have a chance to do the things that we want to do. I said, ‘How much do you owe me right now?’ And they said, ‘$15,000.’ I said, ‘Give me $7,000 and let me go, because this is a bad marriage!’ They gave me $7,000. I quit the project. I came out to Los Angeles....

Kermit the Frog

Southampton College, 1996 Commencement

Congratulations to all of you graduates. As we say in the wetlands, “Ribbit-ribbit-kneedee...ribbit,” which means “May success and a smile always be yours... even when you’re kneedeep in the sticky muck of life.” Now, I know that there are some people out there who wonder what brought me here today.
...Was it the incoming tide on Shinnecock Bay?
...Was it the all-you-can-eat midnight buffet aboard the Paumanok?
...Or was it the promise that I’d get to play basketball with Sidney Green and the Runnin’ Colonials? Don’t let my spindly little arms fool you. I can slam dunk one mean basketball....

First, of course, I want to thank you for bestowing upon me this Honorary Doctorate of Amphibious Letters. To tell you the truth, I never even knew there was such a thing as “Amphibious” Letters. After all those years on Sesame Street, you’d think I’d know my alphabet. It just goes to show that you can teach an old frog new tricks.

It’s great to have an honorary doctorate. I have spoken with my fellow honorees -- Professor Merton, Ms. Meaker, Mr. Gambling -- and as honorary doctors we promise to have regular office hours, put new magazines in our waiting room, and to make late night house calls regardless of your health plan coverage. On behalf of all of us, thank you sincerely.

But I’m also here at Southampton to thank you for something even more important. I am here to thank you for the great work that you have done -- and for the great work that you will be doing with your lives. You have dedicated yourselves to preserving the beauty that is all around us. While some might look out at this great ocean and just see a magnificent view, you and I know that this ocean -- and every ecosystem -- is home to an indefinable number of my fellow animals.

As you go out into the world, never lose sight of the fact that you are not just saving the environment, you are saving the homes and lives of so many of my relatives.
May brings infinite ways to get seriously hurt

By Jenna Johnson

In college, May usually brings graduation parties, senior pranks, alcohol-drenched traditions, finals-are-over celebrations and parties that spill out of houses onto wobbly wooden decks or out of apartments onto balconies. It’s a fun season — until someone gets hurt.

And, unfortunately, this weekend brought news of two such injuries.

On Friday afternoon, University of Texas at Austin students gathered at a busy intersection for an end-of-the-semester ritual that involves running across the street with foam swords. As the students prepared to charge, a freshman ran into the street and was hit by a city bus that reportedly ran a red light, according to an Austin television station. The student walked away from the impact and was later treated for minor injuries. And, of course, graphic videos of the crash are now circulating on the Internet.

Then on Saturday afternoon, a Colorado State University sophomore climbed to the roof of a three-story apartment building during a “mega pool party” and jumped, hitting the side of pool before falling into the water, according to a Fort Collins television station. That student is reportedly in critical condition with numerous broken bones. And, again, someone recorded a video of the gruesome fall.

So, over the next few weeks, please be careful. Seriously. Look both ways before crossing the street. Don’t jump from high places. Don’t challenge your friends to idiotic, high-risk dares that are better suited for reality TV than real life. Don’t throw bottles or start fights. Keep tabs on how much you and your friends are drinking, and don’t be afraid to slow down or sub in a cup filled with water. Always plan how you will get home safely. Always call 9-1-1 if you think someone might need help. And don’t think that you are invincible.

Okay, I’m done lecturing. Enjoy the rest of the school year!
Conference USA to add five schools in 2013

By Sammy Batten
Staff writer

The East Carolina Pirates will be gaining more new neighbors in Conference USA than they'll be losing in 2013.

League officials announced Friday that C-USA will add five schools just in time to offset the loss of four current members who will be defecting to the Big East Conference at the end of the 2012-13 academic year.

"This is really a great day for us, and for me," C-USA commissioner Britton Banowsky said in a teleconference. "It's not often a commissioner gets to announce five new members to a conference on the same day. ...

"While they are all different, each school possesses the same basic attributes. They are growing in increasing relevance to their significant and large communities. In each case, we asked where these schools would be 10 or 12 years from now, and in each case the answer impressed us."

UNC-Charlotte, Florida International, Louisiana Tech, North Texas and Texas-San Antonio will begin C-USA competition starting with the 2013-14 season. Charlotte won't initially compete for the league's football championship.

East Carolina athletic director Terry Holland said in a statement released by the school that the move enhances C-USA's future.

"Conference USA's leadership team is to be congratulated for a bold expansion plan that puts the interests of our student-athletes and the fans who support our programs ahead of all the other concerns and agendas," Holland said. "Conference USA will continue to reap dividends from these decisions well into the next few decades."

Charlotte is in the second year of preparations to launch a football program in 2013 as a Football Championship Subdivision independent. If the 49ers meet NCAA standards, they will move to the Football Bowl Subdivision and C-USA football competition in 2015.
Charlotte was a member of C-USA between 1995-2005, but left the league for the Atlantic 10 Conference because it didn't have a football program.

"The invitation to join Conference USA is momentous in what it can do for our university," Charlotte chancellor Dr. Phillip Dubois said Friday. "We have yet to take a snap on McColl-Richardson field (new football stadium), yet to play our first game, yet to even have our first practice, but because of who we are, because of what we've done and because of the great community we live in, we have the unique opportunity to become one of the first programs in history to go from no football to FBS football in the minimum time allowed by NCAA regulations."

The new additions will help offset the loss of Central Florida, Houston, Memphis and SMU, and will increase C-USA's membership from 12 to 13 schools. Holdovers include East Carolina, Marshall, Rice, Southern Miss, Tulane, Tulsa, UTEP and UAB.

Banowsky said several factors were considered when evaluating potential new members.

"We had a focus on larger institutions in growing markets," Banowsky said. "We wanted a competitive lift, and not only in football.

"We are in a large conference and are getting larger. To be effective, we have to be nationally and regionally relevant. So we had to have geographically sound divisions that makes sense to fans, for rivalries and for the student-athletes. Those things will happen given the grouping of institutions we've brought in."

The conference did not announce how the new league would be structured by division. But reports earlier in the week had ECU being paired in an East Division also consisting of Charlotte, FIU, Marshall, Southern Miss and UAB.

In addition, Old Dominion officials have confirmed the school is considering a move to C-USA or other conferences. The Norfolk, Va., school has not announced his decision.

Banowsky did say no deadline had been set for adding another school, but he admitted the desirable number would be more than 13.

The expansion apparently has not affected an agreement reached earlier this year between C-USA and the Mountain West Conference. The leagues planned to merge into a 24-team "super conference" starting with the 2013-14 academic year.
New neighbors

Here is a quick look at the five new members of Conference USA:

**CHARLOTTE** has an enrollment of 25,063 and sponsors 16 sports, with football beginning competition in 2013. In 2015, the team will play a full conference schedule in the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS). The 49ers are making a return to C-USA, where they were members from 1995-2005. During that time, Charlotte went to eight NCAA Tournaments in men's basketball, winning the C-USA Championship in 1999 and 2001. Charlotte is the No. 25 media market, reaching more than 1.1 million households.

**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL** has an enrollment of 48,000 and sponsors 18 sports. The football team has been to bowl games the past two seasons, including a win in the 2010 Little Caesars Pizza Bowl. The men's soccer team has been an affiliate member of C-USA since 2005. FIU is located in Miami and the No. 16 media market.

**LOUISIANA TECH** has an enrollment of 11,743 and sponsors 16 sports. In 2011, the Bulldog football team won the WAC Championship and participated in the Poinsettia Bowl. The women's basketball program has participated in 25 consecutive NCAA tournaments, advancing to 13 Final Fours, playing in eight national championship games and winning three national titles.

**NORTH TEXAS** has an enrollment of 35,694 and sponsors 16 sports. Since 2003, North Texas has developed more than 12 new athletics facilities as part of a 200-acre Mean Green Village. Competition venues, training facilities and meeting space have been upgraded for all 16 sports since then, including the crown jewel, the brand new $78 million Apogee Stadium that opened in 2011. UNT has approximately 336,000 living alumni, with 216,000 living in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the No. 5 media market in the nation. UTSA has an enrollment of 30,968 and sponsors 17 sports. In their first season of football in 2011, the Roadrunners averaged 35,521 for their games at the Alamodome. UTSA is the only NCAA Division I program in San Antonio, a market that reaches more than 880,000 television households.
Centerline Capital Group Provides Financing for the Acquisition of a Student Housing Property

Mon May 7, 2012 6:25pm EDT

New York, NY - May 7, 2012 - Centerline Capital Group ("Centerline"), a provider of real estate financial and asset management services for affordable and conventional multifamily housing, and a subsidiary of Centerline Holding Company (OTC: CLNH), announced today it has provided a $11.625 MM DUS Student Housing facility to Realco Capital Partners for the acquisition of University Suites, a student housing property located in Greenville, North Carolina.

Realco Capital Partners is a New York-based real estate investment and development organization with extensive experience in all facets of real estate investments and development. Founded in 1974, Realco currently owns student housing assets in North Carolina, Texas, Florida, and Louisiana.

University Suites is a garden style student housing facility that consists of a total of 171 units encompassing 503 beds. Property amenities include a clubhouse with kitchen, 2 tanning beds, pool table, lounge area with fireplace and big-screen TV, 24-hour computer lab, and 24-hour fitness center, as well as an outdoor pool, sand volleyball court, and basketball court. The property is located approximately 1 mile south of East Carolina University, and is conveniently situated on the ECU campus bus route providing routine bus service to the University.

The deal was brought to Centerline by Austin, Texas-based GRC Capital, Inc. Commented Nick Gonzalez, President of GRC Capital, "Vic Clark, Colin Cross, and the Centerline Capital team worked tirelessly and
seamlessly to deliver a commitment in 23 days and close the deal in 37. Their timely efforts helped my client acquire the project quickly and enabled them to begin influencing the pre-leasing efforts for the coming school year. We look forward to working with Centerline again."

"University Suites is a well located student housing property that draws from students attending East Carolina University," noted Vic Clark, Managing Director, Originations at Centerline. "We were pleased to partner with GRC Capital to provide Realco Capital Partners the funding they needed to complete their fourth student housing deal. We hope to work with them on future acquisitions as they work to expand their student housing portfolio."

The Mortgage Banking Group at Centerline provides mortgage financing for conventional multifamily properties throughout the United States. Centerline is a Fannie Mae DUS lender, Freddie Mac seller-servicer, FHA-approved mortgage provider and source for other forms of alternative capital.

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About Centerline Capital Group

Centerline Capital Group, a subsidiary of Centerline Holding Company (OTC: CLNH), provides real estate financing and asset management services focused on affordable and conventional multifamily housing. We offer a range of both debt financing and equity investment products, as well as asset management services to developers, owners, and investors. An industry leader, Centerline is structured to originate, underwrite, service, manage, refinance or sell through all phases of an asset's life cycle. A leading sponsor of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funds, Centerline has raised more than $10 billion in equity across 136 funds, and invested in over 1,600 assets spanning 47 states. The firm's multifamily lending platform services more than $11 billion in loans. Founded in 1972, Centerline is headquartered in New York City, with 243 employees in ten offices throughout the United States. A strategic partner of Island Capital, Centerline is organized around four business units: Affordable Housing Equity, Affordable Housing Debt, Mortgage Banking and Asset Management. To learn more about Centerline, visit www.centerline.com.

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Opinion

The looming tsunami of online higher education

By David Brooks

May 7, 2012

Online education is not new. The University of Phoenix started its online
degree program in 1989. Four million college students took at least one
online class during the fall of 2007.

But, over the past few months, something has changed. The elite, pace-
setting universities have embraced the Internet. Not long ago, online courses
were interesting experiments. Now online activity is at the core of how these
schools envision their futures.

Last week, Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
committed $60 million to offer free online courses from both universities.
Two Stanford professors, Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller, have formed a
company, Coursera, which offers interactive courses in the humanities,
social sciences, mathematics and engineering. Their partners include
Stanford, Michigan, Penn and Princeton. Many other elite universities,
including Yale and Carnegie Mellon, are moving aggressively online.
President John Hennessy of Stanford summed up the emerging view in an
article by Ken Auletta in The New Yorker, "There's a tsunami coming."

What happened to the newspaper and magazine business is about to happen
to higher education: a rescrambling around the Web.

Many of us view the coming change with trepidation. Will online learning
diminish the face-to-face community that is the heart of the college
experience? Will it elevate functional courses in business and marginalize
subjects that are harder to digest in an online format, like philosophy? Will
fast online browsing replace deep reading?

If a few star professors can lecture to millions, what happens to the rest of
the faculty? Will academic standards be as rigorous? What happens to the
students who don't have enough intrinsic motivation to stay glued to their
laptop hour after hour? How much communication is lost - gesture, mood, eye contact - when you are not actually in a room with a passionate teacher and students?

The doubts are justified, but there are more reasons to feel optimistic. In the first place, online learning will give millions of students access to the world's best teachers. Already, hundreds of thousands of students have taken accounting classes from Norman Nemrow of Brigham Young University, robotics classes from Sebastian Thrun of Stanford and physics from Walter Lewin of MIT.

Online learning could extend the influence of U.S. universities around the world. India alone hopes to build tens of thousands of colleges over the next decade. Curricula from U.S. schools could permeate those institutions.

Research into online learning suggests that it is roughly as effective as classroom learning. It's easier to tailor a learning experience to an individual student's pace and preferences. Online learning seems especially useful in language and remedial education.

The most important and paradoxical fact shaping the future of online learning is this: A brain is not a computer. We are not blank hard drives waiting to be filled with data. People learn from people they love and remember the things that arouse emotion. If you think about how learning actually happens, you can discern many different processes. There is absorbing information. There is reflecting upon information as you reread it and think about it. There is scrambling information as you test it in discussion or try to mesh it with contradictory information. Finally there is synthesis, as you try to organize what you have learned into an argument or a paper.

Online education mostly helps students with Step 1. As Richard A. DeMillo of Georgia Tech has argued, it turns transmitting knowledge into a commodity that is cheap and globally available. But it also compels colleges to focus on the rest of the learning process, which is where the real value lies. In an online world, colleges have to think hard about how they are going to take communication, which comes over the Web, and turn it into learning, which is a complex social and emotional process.

How are they going to blend online information with face-to-face discussion, tutoring, debate, coaching, writing and projects? How are they going to build the social capital that leads to vibrant learning communities? Online education could potentially push colleges up the value chain - away from information transmission and up to higher things.
In a blended online world, a local professor could select not only the reading material, but do so from an array of different lecturers, who would provide different perspectives from around the world. The local professor would do more tutoring and conversing and less lecturing. Clayton Christensen of Harvard Business School notes it will be easier to break academic silos, combining calculus and chemistry lectures or literature and history presentations in a single course.

The early Web radically democratized culture, but now in the media and elsewhere you're seeing a flight to quality. The best U.S. colleges should be able to establish a magnetic authoritative presence online.

My guess is it will be easier to be a terrible university on the wide-open Web, but it will also be possible for the most committed schools and students to be better than ever.

*David Brooks is a columnist for The New York Times.*